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1930 CENSUS OF MERCHANT SEAMEN

Introduction

On the three rolls of this microfilm publication, M1932, are reproduced the schedules of the 1930 census of merchant seamen. These records are part of the Records of Bureau of the Census, Record Group (RG) 29. In addition, correspondence and subject files relating to the taking of this census have also been reproduced from RG 29 and from RG 41, Records of the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation.

Background

During the fifteenth census of the United States taken in 1930, the Bureau of the Census (hereafter, "Bureau") for the first time made special effort to ensure that merchant seamen serving on U.S.-flag merchant vessels were properly enumerated. It is probable that in previous decennial censuses enumeration of these persons was inconsistent: they were either enumerated at their home or with their vessel, or over-counted by being enumerated both at their home and with their vessel, or not counted at either their home or vessel. To correct these deficiencies, in 1930 the Bureau used a new form, 15-202, *Crews of Vessels*, along with related instructions that are described below. The fifteenth census was the only decennial census in which a special form was used.

Why did the Bureau choose to use a special form and go to extra effort in 1930? No explanation has been found in the Bureau's administrative records other than a 1928 statement by the Bureau's geographer, Clarence E. Batschelet, that the enumeration of merchant crewmen was "a vexing question and a piece of work very difficult to handle."¹ It seems likely, however, that the enumeration of seamen on U.S.-flag vessels had been a fairly insignificant task from 1790 through 1910.² In 1920, as a result of the huge number of U.S.-flag vessels built for World War I, the Bureau undoubtedly found itself faced with a task for which neither it nor its enumerators were prepared.³

¹ "Memorandum for the Director," Aug. 24, 1928, from Clarence E. Batschelet, Geographer; File "Geographic Work," in Box 17, "Geography Division Correspondence, 1906-50" (UD Series 97; MLR No. 110206; Accession NN3-29-90-2); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group (RG) 29, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington, DC.

² From 1885 to 1910, U.S. ships carried less than 15 percent of the nation's total foreign trade. See *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Navigation to the Secretary of Commerce for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1910*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1910): 172.

³ In the year ended June 30, 1930, there were 1,117 U.S.-flag vessels engaged in foreign trade and 1,292 U.S.-flag vessels engaged in coasting trade, out of a total of 25,214 documented craft of all kinds. See *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Navigation to the Secretary of Commerce for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1930* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1930): 1. For the year ended June 1, 1930, foreign trade tonnage was 5,219,552 gross tons, or substantially less than the peak of 10,699,596 gross tons during the year ended June 1, 1921. *Ibid.*, p. 1 (see errata sheet correction). On September 30, 1920, there were 2,964 "seagoing ships of 1,000 gross tons or more which conduct nearly all our foreign trade and nearly all our domestic trade by sea over long routes" out of approximately 28,000 documented craft. See *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Navigation to the Secretary of Commerce for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1920*, p. 11 (Washington: GPO, 1920). The

During the 1920s, U.S. policy favored the retention of a large U.S. merchant marine fleet,⁴ so it is likely the Bureau expected to again have difficulty in enumerating large numbers of seamen. Thus, it planned specifically for this task by developing a special schedule and instructions for enumerating them.

Forms and Instructions

The Bureau developed two forms and two sets of instructions that are pertinent to the special treatment of merchant seamen:

Form 15-6, *Population Schedule*, was used for the bulk of the U.S. population, including officers of vessels.

Form 15-100, *Instructions to Enumerators: Population and Agriculture [Revised]*, explained the use of Form 15-6 and contained special mention of seamen on U.S.-flag vessels.

Form 15-202, *Crews of Vessels*, was used to enumerate ordinary seamen.

Form 15-203, *Instructions for Filling out Schedule for Crews of Vessels*, explained the use of Form 15-202.

Both schedules and their related instructions are explained in the text that follows.

Form 15-6, *Population Schedule*

The bulk of the U.S. population was enumerated on Form 15-6, *Population Schedule*, in which column 5, “Name of each person...,” was the space for recording each person’s surname followed by first name and middle initial. The Bureau provided detailed guidance to enumerators regarding the completion of Form 15-6 in Form 15-100, *Instructions to Enumerators: Population and Agriculture [Revised]* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1930). On page 10, paragraphs 56–58, the Bureau defined the term “absent persons” and directed how these persons were to be enumerated, as follows:

56. Residents absent on census day. There will be a certain number of persons having their usual place of abode in your district who are absent at the time of the enumeration. These you must include and enumerate, obtaining the facts regarding them from their families, relatives, acquaintances, or other persons able to give this information. A son or daughter permanently located elsewhere, however, or regularly employed elsewhere and not sleeping at home, should not be included with the family. Persons to be counted as members of the family include the following: . . .⁵

57. In the great majority of cases it is more than likely that the names of absent members of the family will not be given to you by the person furnishing the information, unless particular attention is called to them. Before finishing the enumeration of a family you should in all cases, therefore, *specifically ask the question as to whether there are any absent members*, as described above, who should be enumerated with the family.

58. Designation for absent persons. After you have entered the name of such absent member of the family, write after the name in column 5, well toward the right-hand side of the column, the

commissioner does not specify the number of U.S. ships in foreign and coasting trade in 1910, but gives the number of documented craft as 25,740. See *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Navigation to the Secretary of Commerce for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1910*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1910): 10. Documented craft include barges, canal boats, yachts, and so forth.

⁴ John D. Hicks, *Republican Ascendancy, 1921–1933* (New York: Harper & Row, First Harper Torchbook ed., 1963), pp. 9–10.

⁵ Omitted text deals with servants and boarders, and persons travelling or at schools, colleges, or hospitals.

designation, "Ab," thus, "Smith, Robert B.--Ab."

This general rule regarding the enumeration of "absent members" was, however, specifically negated by the Bureau on page 14, paragraphs 75-77, as to merchant seamen:

75. Sailors on merchant vessels. The officers of merchant vessels under the United States flag should be enumerated at their homes on land, where they will be reported by some member of the family.

76. Special provision is made for the enumeration of the crews of vessels in foreign or intercoastal trade on the Great Lakes and of the crews of sea-going private vessels of all kinds, except yachts, under the American-flag, even though these crews have homes on shore. You should omit such men from your enumeration, therefore, when they are returned as "absent members" by their families. You are to include, however, and report in the regular way, men employed on boats running on the *inland waters* (rivers, canals, etc.) of the United States, other than the Great Lakes.

77. You are also to enumerate, where found, all persons usually employed on board ship who are out of employment on the census date. Crews of foreign vessels are not to be enumerated.

Thus, if the enumerators faithfully followed the Bureau's instructions, one should expect to find vessel officers enumerated with their families on the Form 15-6, but should find ordinary vessel crewmen enumerated only with their vessel on Form 15-202, described below.

Form 15-202, *Crews of Vessels*

The Bureau's new form, 15-202, *Crews of Vessels*, requested the following information:

Name and address of owner or operator of vessel

Name of vessel and its home port

Date of enumeration

Name of enumerator, usually his signature and/or typewritten name

1. Name of each person whose *place of abode* on April 1, 1930, was on board this ship
2. Sex
3. Color or race
4. Age at last birthday
5. Single, married, widowed, or divorced
6. Whether able to read and write
7. Place of birth. If born in the United States, give the State or Territory. If of foreign birth, give the country of birth.
8. Naturalized or alien
9. Whether able to speak English
10. Occupation--Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done, as *purser, electrician, machinist, seaman, stewardess, cook*, etc.
11. Whether a veteran of the U.S. military or naval forces mobilized for any war or expedition. Yes or No
12. What war or expedition
13. Address of wife or next of kin

The Bureau explained this new form in Form 15-203, *Instructions for Filling out Schedule for Crews of Vessels* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1929), which is reproduced in Appendix III. The instructions specified that officers “who have regular or fixed places of abode ashore” would be enumerated at their homes during the regular enumeration. All other seamen were to be included on Form 15-202 even if they claimed to “maintain fixed places of abode on shore.”

Since the Bureau did not define the term “officer,” however, there was inconsistency in who was reported, as described in “Records Description” below. It may be that the Bureau intended the enumerators, all of whom should have been familiar with existing maritime laws, to rely on the long-standing legal definition of an officer as a person “in charge of a watch.”

Citizenship of Officers. All the officers of vessels of the United States who shall have charge of a watch, including pilots, shall in all cases be citizens of the United States. The word “officers” shall include the chief engineer and each assistant engineer in charge of a watch on vessels propelled wholly or in part by steam; and after the first day of January eighteen hundred and ninety-seven, no person shall be qualified to hold a license as a commander or watch officer of a merchant vessel of the United States who is not a native-born citizen, or whose naturalization as a citizen shall not have been fully completed. (*R. S. 4131; May 28, 1896, sec. 1.*)⁶

Officer’s License. The boards of local inspectors shall license and classify the masters, chief mates, and second and third mates, if in charge of a watch, engineers, and pilots of all steam vessels, and the masters of sail vessels of over seven hundred gross tons, and all other vessels of over one hundred gross tons carrying passengers for hire.... (*R. S. 4438; Dec. 21, 1898; Jan. 25, 1907; May 28, 1908, sec. 2. See act June 9, 1910, p. 243.*)⁷

Procedural History of the Form 15-202

The early history of the Form 15-202 is largely unknown since little information has been found in the Bureau’s administrative records. In an August 24, 1928, memorandum to the Director of the Census that described the ongoing work in preparation for the fifteenth census, Geographer Clarence E. Batschelet mentioned the enumeration of vessel crew this way:

Local enumerators in New York, as well as ports where vessels must be enumerated, will be aided greatly this time, due to the fact that arrangements will be made so that the owners of such vessels will supply us with data for all persons on board their respective vessels on the date of the census. This will relieve the local supervisor and enumerator of a vexing question and a piece of work very difficult to handle, and yet permit a complete census of people on ships registered in the United States, irrespective of their location at the time of the census.⁸

After drafting the schedule and related instructions, the Bureau, sometime during 1929, had 25,000 copies of the Form 15-202 and 3,000 of the Form 15-203 printed by the U.S. Government Printing Office.

⁶ Bureau of Navigation, U.S. Department of Commerce, *Navigation Laws of the United States, 1927* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1927), p. 35.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁸ “Memorandum for the Director,” Aug. 24, 1928, from Clarence E. Batschelet, Geographer; UD Series 97, RG 29, NARA.

The Bureau's plan for collecting the data ultimately had two components. Information on vessel crew on ships engaged in foreign trade--"in cases where articles of agreement between master and seamen in the merchant service of the United States are required by law"--would be collected by the deputies of U.S. shipping commissioners, or collectors of customs who acted as shipping commissioners, from the shipping articles.⁹ Information on vessel crews on the Great Lakes or in intercoastal trade would be collected by an employee of those shipping companies and submitted to the Bureau.

Vessels Engaged in Foreign Trade

On August 21, 1929, William M. Steuart, Director of the Bureau of the Census, wrote to Arthur J. Tyrer, Commissioner of Navigation, regarding the proposed census of merchant seamen. This lengthy letter, reproduced as Appendix I, details the Bureau's thinking on the data to be collected and possible means of acquiring it. Essentially, the Director requested the cooperation of the U.S. Shipping Commissioners--who were part of the Bureau of Navigation--to collect the data from shipping articles filed with the commissioners.

On August 24, 1929, the Commissioner of Navigation answered this letter, responding that the best method of collecting the data would be for the shipping commissioners, or collectors of customs who act as shipping commissioners, to designate their deputies as enumerators to copy the information from the shipping articles. He also provided a list of every port of documentation in the United States, but noted that customs officers at ports on the western rivers and northern lakes "do not sign seamen in the foreign trade."¹⁰ This letter apparently generated telephone calls and meetings within the Department of Commerce,¹¹ for the next correspondence is from Navigation Commissioner Tyrer to the U.S. shipping commissioners at Philadelphia and New York, August 30, 1929, advising that "Messrs. W. S. Gilchrist and S. S. Slick of the Bureau of the Census will be in your office about noon" Wednesday and Thursday, respectively, "to confer with you in regard to the best method of obtaining statistics of seamen in foreign and perhaps coastwise trade."¹² Since Philadelphia and New York were two of the busiest U.S. ports both in cargo and in the number of ships for which they were designated home ports, the shipping commissioners there were probably deemed best suited to confer with the Census Bureau on the technical details of taking the census. On September 24, 1929, A. R. Smith, U.S. Shipping Commissioner at Philadelphia, advised the Commissioner of Navigation that he had met with Gilchrist and Slick, and enclosed a copy of his August 24, 1929, letter to the Director of the Census. In that letter Smith referred to the Director's letter of September 14, 1929--which unfortunately has not been located--and stated he agreed with the "suggestions

⁹ Shipping articles were required by *Revised Statutes 4501-4613*, as follows: "The master of every vessel bound from a port in the United States to any foreign port other than vessels engaged in trade between the United States and the British North American possessions, or the West India Islands, or the republic of Mexico, or of any vessel of the burden of seventy-five tons or upward, bound from a port on the Atlantic to a port on the Pacific, or vice versa, shall, before he proceeds on such voyage, make an agreement, in writing or in print, with every seaman whom he carries to sea as one of the crew ... in the form given in the table marked "A" in the schedule annexed to this Title [*R.S. 4501-4613*], and ... shall contain the following particulars." Bureau of Navigation, U.S. Department of Commerce, *Navigation Laws of the United States, 1927* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1927), p. 43.

¹⁰ Arthur J. Tyrer, Commissioner of Navigation, to Director of the Census, Washington, DC, Aug. 24, 1929; File 170540-N, General Records, 1884-1934, Records of the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation, RG 41, NARA.

¹¹ Both the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Navigation were components of the Department of Commerce.

¹² Arthur J. Tyrer, Commissioner of Navigation, to U.S. Shipping Commissioner, New York, NY, Aug. 30, 1929; File 170540-N, General Records, 1884-1934, RG 41, NARA. The meeting probably took place closer to Sept. 24, instead of the Wednesday and Thursday immediately following Aug. 30.

regarding obtaining data of seamen aboard vessels of American registry, engaged in the foreign trades, and also their suggested method of reporting such.”¹³

Meanwhile, on September 20, 1929, Navigation Commissioner Tyrer sent a memorandum to all U.S. shipping commissioners and collectors of customs acting as shipping commissioners that stated,

The Bureau of Navigation is desirous of cooperating in every way with the Bureau of the Census so that a correct enumeration can be made of the crews on vessels in foreign trade.

Please give the inclosed [sic] letter from the Director of the Census careful consideration and advise him fully on whether or not you regard as practicable and desirable cooperation in the manner indicated in his letter. If you regard the plan as practicable the Bureau has no objection to your cooperating in the method proposed.¹⁴

Unfortunately, “the inclosed letter from the Director of the Census,” dated Sept. 23, 1929, has not been located,¹⁵ but is referred to repeatedly in letters from shipping commissioners and collectors of customs acting as such. The shipping commissioners from Baltimore, MD; Boston, MA; Mobile, AL; New Orleans, LA; Norfolk, VA; and collectors of customs from Port Arthur, TX, and Wilmington, NC, wrote favorable letters to the Director of the Census pledging their cooperation.¹⁶ Kyle Elam, collector of customs at Port Arthur, TX, pledged his cooperation, but expressed doubts about the plan as he (perhaps incorrectly) understood it:

We doubt the value of a census statement obtained in the manner outlined by the Bureau. Our experience has shown that our vessels frequently change from foreign to the coasting trade and that shipping articles are frequently written so that they permit such change. It would be difficult, therefore, for us to determine what vessels were in the foreign trade as of April 1, 1930. If we could determine that fact, we would still be faced with the fact that many men sign shipping articles and afterwards fail to join their ship, thus making the articles only relatively accurate at best. We find also that practically all seamen show on the shipping articles some home address whether they actually maintain a home there or not. We would have few ships signing crews on the first day of April, so we could not actually canvass but few of the crews as of that day. For these and other reasons we might mention, any statement of the facts desired made up from shipping articles will be worth little more than a guess.

We believe a better plan to obtain the statistical information desired would be to provide a special form of census report to be made out by the master or other officer or person in charge of every American ship on April 1, 1930, and place this form, with appropriate instructions and authority, in the hands of the persons in charge of such vessels prior to the said April 1, 1930. These reports could be made in a few minutes at a certain time on the day named, after a personal canvass of the crew, and thus made quite accurate. These reports could be first delivered to the Collectors of

¹³ A. R. Smith, Shipping Commissioner, Philadelphia, PA, to W. M. Steuart, Director, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC, Sept. 24, 1929; File 170540-N, General Records, 1884–1934, RG 41, NARA.

¹⁴ Memorandum, Arthur J. Tyrer, Commissioner of Navigation, to U.S. Shipping Commissioners and Collectors of Customs acting as Shipping Commissioners, Sept. 20, 1929; File 170540-N, General Records, 1884–1934, RG 41, NARA. An unsigned type-written draft dated Aug. 22, 1929, is also in the file.

¹⁵ It is not in the “Office Records of William M. Steuart, 1922–32,” (Preliminary Inventory [PI] 161, Series 140; MLR 109465) nor has it been located in other RG 29 record series too numerous to mention here. It is also not among the extant records of U.S. shipping commissioners held by NARA regional archives.

¹⁶ See File 170540-N, General Records, 1884–1934, RG 41, NARA.

Customs on April 1, 1930, or on the vessel's first arrival in port thereafter, and by the Collector forwarded to the Bureau.¹⁷

On January 13, 1930, the Director of the Census, with signed approval by the Commissioner of Navigation, sent a lengthy letter of instructions to U.S. Shipping Commissioners at Baltimore, MD; Boston, MA; Galveston, TX; New Orleans, LA; New York, NY; Norfolk, VA; Philadelphia, PA; Providence, RI; San Francisco, CA; San Pedro, CA; and Seattle, WA; and to Collectors of Customs acting as shipping commissioners at Savannah, GA, and Tampa, FL. This letter, reproduced in Appendix II, notified them of their appointment as Supervisor of the Census at their respective ports "for the enumeration of crews of vessels in cases where articles of agreement between master and seamen in the merchant service of the United States are required by law" and provided additional instructions for the taking of the census.¹⁸ A similar letter was sent to U.S. Shipping Commissioners at Mobile, AL; Newport News, VA; and Portland, ME; and to Collectors of Customs acting as shipping commissioners at Bridgeport, CT; Charleston, SC; Port Arthur, TX; Portland, OR; and Wilmington, NC, notifying them of their appointment as enumerator at their respective ports.¹⁹

On April 29, 1930, Census Director Steuart wrote to Navigation Commissioner Tyrer, informing him that the shipping commissioners and collectors of customs acting as such, had completed their work on the census schedules "very carefully ... in accordance with the instructions given," enumerating 31,685 persons on 866 vessels.²⁰

Vessels on the Great Lakes and in Intercoastal Trade

In order to enumerate crews on vessels in the intercoastal trade, including the Great Lakes, the Bureau needed the assistance of the shipping companies owning these vessels, which was done through correspondence initiated by the Bureau's Field Division. The extent of this correspondence in 1929 and before is unknown, but the Field Division's January-June 1930 monthly reports to the Director (routed through the Bureau's chief clerk), provide evidence as to the scale of the work:²¹

Jan. 1930: "The work of corresponding with Steamship Companies, etc., was continued in January, and 247 and 190 form letters were sent in this connection. Cards are now in file for 812 companies, 715 of which have been completed as to vessels, crews, ports, etc. A total of 254 letters were received in this connection in January; also 37 telegrams were sent and 27 received."

"Letters to Shipping Commissioners and Collectors of Customs who will handle the enumeration of crews of vessels shipping through their respective offices were sent out during the month."

Feb. 1930: "The work of corresponding with steamship companies, etc., was continued in

¹⁷ Letter, Kyle Elam, Collector of Customs, Port Arthur, TX, to Director of the Census, Washington, DC, Sept. 30, 1929, in *ibid.*

¹⁸ Letters from Director of the Census to various U.S. shipping commissioners and collectors of customs acting as shipping commissioners, Jan. 13, 1930, in *ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Letter from William Steuart, Director of the Census, to Arthur J. Tyrer, Commissioner of Navigation, Apr. 29, 1930; File 173777-N, General Records, 1884-1934, RG 41, NARA.

²¹ Field Division monthly reports, Jan.-June 1930; Box 45 of "Monthly Reports, 1912-56" (PI 161, Series 193; MLR No. 109539), RG 29, NARA.

February, and 79 special and 39 form letters were sent in this connection. Cards were completed this month for 43 companies. A total of 151 letters were received in this connection in February; also 26 telegrams were sent and 21 received.”

Mar. 1930: “The work of corresponding with steamship companies, etc., was continued in March, and 258 special and 258 form letters were sent in this connection. A total of 118 letters were received in March; also 7 telegrams were sent and 7 received.”

Apr. 1930: Detailed report not extant.

May 1930: “The work of corresponding with steamship companies, etc., was continued in May, and 98 letters were received and 132 special letters were sent in this connection. Census reports were received from 59 boat companies and checked with the card index. A total of 78 enumerators’ pay vouchers were certified.”

June 1930 and later: No further mention.

Schedules sent to steamship companies were completed by an employee of the vessel owner or operator (usually a corporation); some of these enumerators identified both their name and their position in the corporation.

Tabulating the Census

Following the collection of the schedules, each had to be allocated to the correct enumeration district (ED) in the vessel’s home port to ensure an accurate population count. For the five largest ports--Baltimore, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, and Seattle--that task was difficult and required the Bureau to again enlist the assistance of the U.S. Shipping Commissioner. The Bureau’s September 10, 1930, letter to the U.S. Shipping Commissioner in Baltimore is typical:

Under the apportionment law it is necessary for the Bureau to assign to the appropriate wards in Baltimore the crews of vessels who were enumerated for the population census through your office and through the steamship companies and operators. In order to make this apportionment it will be necessary for the Bureau to know the exact location of the piers at which the vessels usually dock, or in the case of vessels which anchor in the harbor the nearest point on shore to the vessels.

In inclose [sic] a list of the vessels whose crews were enumerated at Baltimore. The Bureau will greatly appreciate it if you will indicate on this list the location of the pier or place of anchor, and return the list to the Bureau as promptly as possible. The location should be described according to the following examples: Pier 6, Pratt Street, between Charles and Gay Streets. Foot of Light Street. In harbor, Foot of Barge Street.²²

For some home ports, instead of allocating the crewmen to an existing enumeration district, the Bureau created a new enumeration district specifically for crews of vessels²³ and entered that into its 1930 “plans

²² Chief, Field Division, to U.S. Shipping Commissioner, Baltimore, MD, Sept. 10, 1930 [carbon copy]; File “Crews of Vessels, 1930: Lists of Vessels of Which Crews were Enumerated at the Ports of Baltimore, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, and Seattle,” Box 43 of “Geography Division Subject File, 1889–1950” (PI 160, Series 160; MLR No. 109522), RG 29, NARA, Washington, DC.

²³ See, for instance, “Memorandum for Mr. Batschelet” from Edward W. Koch, Chief of Division, July 22, 1930, or “Memorandum for Mr. Koch” from Geographer, Aug. 8, 1930, *both in* File “Crews of Vessels, 1930,” Box 43 of “Geography Division Subject File, 1889–1950.”

of division,” which have been reproduced as rolls 61–90 of NARA Microfilm Publication T1224, *Descriptions of Census Enumeration Districts, 1830–1950* (156 rolls).

After allocating each schedule to the correct ED, Bureau employees prepared the schedule for statistical tabulation. In addition to the 13 numbered columns described above, the Form 15-202 also contained three lettered columns “for office use only” into which a tabulation code was entered:

- A – state code
- B – country code
- C – occupation code

Subsequently, the data from the schedules were tabulated for statistical purposes and this information was incorporated into the Bureau’s published reports on the Fifteenth Census.

Then, in 1932, the schedules were prepared for storage. They were arranged in 11 numbered “portfolios” alphabetically by state, then usually numerically by enumeration district. Within each portfolio, the pages were numbered sequentially with a mechanical stamp.²⁴ The page number consists of two parts: the portfolio number and the page number within the portfolio. Most pages have data on only one side; some have data on the reverse side.

Records Description

The records reproduced on this microfilm publication are from four RG 29 series, and from one RG 41 series.

Series 1: Manuscript Schedules of the 1930 Census of Merchant Seamen

These consist of the Forms 15-202, *Crews of Vessels*, which are designated as “Manuscript Schedules of the 1930 Census of Merchant Seamen, 1930” (RG 29, UD Series 170; MLR No. 110477). As mentioned above, since the Bureau did not define the term “officer,” there was inconsistency in who was reported on these forms. The captain or master of the vessel was clearly considered an officer, and was never reported. Sometimes 1st, 2nd, or 3rd mates were included, sometimes not. Sometimes the chief engineer, and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd assistant engineers were reported, sometimes not. The U.S. Shipping Commissioner at San Francisco reported licensed officers who were single, widowed, or divorced, but did not report married officers on the assumption they maintained a “permanent residence ashore.”²⁵

Series 2: Census Bureau Geography Division Correspondence, 1906–50

One item is reproduced from the Census Bureau’s “Geography Division Correspondence, 1906–50” (RG 29, UD Series 97; MLR No. 110206; Accession NN3-29-90-2):

“Memorandum for the Director” from Clarence E. Batschelet, Geographer, Aug. 24, 1928, from the File, “Geographic Work,” in Box 17.

Series 3: Census Bureau Geography Division Subject File, 1889–1950

²⁴ See “Memorandum for Mr. Batschelet” from Edward W. Koch, Supervising Expert, Sept. 2, 1932; File “Crews of Vessels, 1930,” Box 43 of “Geography Division Subject File, 1889–1950.”

²⁵ “Scope of the Census,” undated report from Office of U.S. Shipping Commissioner, San Francisco, CA; File 173777-N, General Records, 1884–1934, RG 41, NARA.

Two files are reproduced from the “Geography Division Subject File, 1889–1950” (RG 29, Preliminary Inventory [PI] 161, Series 160; MLR No. 109522), from Box 43:

Crews of Vessels, 1930: Lists and Memos

Crews of Vessels, 1930: Lists of Vessels of which Crews were Enumerated at the Ports of Baltimore, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, and Seattle.

Series 4: Census Bureau Monthly Reports, 1912–56

The January through June 1930 monthly reports of the “Field Division, Fifteenth Census,” have been selected from the Census Bureau “Monthly Reports, Jan. 1912–June 1956” (RG 29, PI 161, Series 193; MLR No. 109539). The Field Division’s April 1930 monthly report is not extant except for a brief memo by acting chief F. A. Gosnell. No division reports were retained from 1929; only the Director’s monthly reports to the Director of the Department of Commerce, containing a brief summary of the activities of all of the Bureau’s divisions, exist for 1929. These reports are from the Bureau’s general records and were maintained in 1930 in the Office of the Chief Clerk.

Series 5: Bureau of Navigation General Records, 1884–1934

Two files have been reproduced from the “Bureau of Navigation General Records, 1884–1934” (RG 41, UD Series 110; MLR 129708):

File No. 170540-N

File No. 173777-N

This series contains the Bureau’s “central office” correspondence, arranged by file number and indexed by name, subject, or title in a related card index. The Bureau of Navigation was created in 1884, consolidated with the Steamboat Inspection Service in 1934, and renamed the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation in 1936.

Related Records

No records concerning the 1930 census of merchant seamen were found in NARA regional archives in the records of the U.S. shipping commissioners in RG 41, Records of the Bureau of Marine Navigation and Inspection. Some NARA regional archives also checked, but found nothing in their holdings in RG 36, Records of the United States Customs Service; RG 26, Records of the U.S. Coast Guard; or RG 32, Records of the United States Shipping Board. No mention of the 1930 census of merchant seamen was found in the 1928–32 segment of “Index to General Correspondence, 1903–1950” of the Office of the Secretary of Commerce (NC-54, Series 2), in General Records of the Department of Commerce, RG 40. These subjects were searched: activities of Department of Commerce; census; Customs, Collectors of; fifteenth census; merchant marine; merchant vessels; marine; Navigation, Bureau of; seaman; seamen; services of Department of Commerce; Stuart, Dr. William; shipping commissioners; vessels.

APPENDIX I

Letter, W. M. Steuart, Director, Bureau of the Census, to Arthur J. Tyrer, Commissioner of Navigation, Washington, DC, August 21, 1929

Source: File 170540-N, Bureau of Navigation General Records, 1884–1934 (UD Series 110; MLR

129708), Records of the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation, RG 41, NARA, Washington, DC.

Dear Sir:

The census act, approved June 18, 1929, requires that the fifteenth decennial census of population shall be taken as of April 1, 1930, and shall include those persons who may be regarded as having no "place of abode" other than the vessels on which they are employed. The vessels may, of course, be at sea on the date of the census; and for this and other reasons the Bureau of the Census will hardly be in a position to take a complete and accurate census without the cooperation of those officials of the government who are in direct touch with the masters and seamen on vessels of American registry engaged in foreign trade. It has therefore been suggested that the required census data for crews of vessels which operate under articles of agreement between masters and seamen in the merchant service of the United States as required by act of Congress, Title LIII, Revised Statutes of the United States, may be secured by the U.S. Shipping Commissioners or their deputies at the time the shipping articles for each vessel are prepared. These articles appear to give the following data:

Name of seaman
Birthplace
Whether native-born, naturalized, or alien
Age
Complexion, i.e., white, colored, Chinese, or Japanese
Occupation on board vessel
Whether able to read and write, shown by seaman's signature or mark on the shipping articles.

The following additional information would be desired for the census, but it is understood that such information can be readily secured on the shipping articles:

If born in the United States, name of state
Whether seaman is veteran, and if so, war or expedition in which engaged
Whether seaman is single, married, or divorced

If a duplicate of the shipping articles, with the foregoing information, can be made for the census at the time the shipping articles are prepared, the census data can then be transcribed from the duplicate copy to the population schedule in one of three ways, namely:

1. Deputy shipping commissioners to be appointed as enumerators to transcribe the required data from the duplicate copy of the shipping articles to the census schedule at such times as they might find convenient without interference with their regular duties.
2. Members of deputies' families to be appointed as enumerators to copy data on census schedules.
3. Attorneys or other persons who secure data from shipping articles for use in court or for other purposes to be appointed as enumerators for copying data on census schedules.

The census act provides that employees of the Department of Commerce and other departments and independent offices of the government may, with the consent of the head of the respective department or office, be employed and compensated for field work in connection with the fifteenth decennial census. In connection with this proviso the Comptroller General in a decision dated July 24, 1929, states in part:

you are advised that the employees of the Department of Commerce and other executive departments and independent establishments may be employed and compensated for field work in

connection with the fifteenth decennial census without regard to the provisions of section 1764 or 1765, Revised Statutes, or the act of May 10, 1916, as amended.

In view of the foregoing, if no objection is perceived, I respectfully ask your consent to take the matter up with the U.S. Shipping Commissioners to ascertain whether or not they regard as practicable and desirable cooperation in the manner indicated in taking the census of members of crews of vessels which are subject to requirements of the federal laws relating to articles of agreement between master and seamen. It is believed that if the shipping commissioners can see their way clear to cooperate with the Bureau of the Census in the manner stated, arrangements can be made so that the census enumeration will not interfere in any way with their regular duties, and it is proposed, of course, to pay suitable compensation to those who may be engaged in the census work. If this plan meets with your approval, will you be good enough to furnish me with a list, giving the names and addresses of the shipping commissioners, and also of the collectors or deputy collectors of customs who perform the duties of shipping commissioners at those ports where shipping commissioners are not provided.

Very truly yours,
[signed] W. M. Stuart
Director

APPENDIX II

Letter, W. M. Stuart, Director of the Census, to various shipping commissioners and collectors of customs acting as shipping commissioners, January 13, 1930

Source: File 170540-N, Bureau of Navigation General Records, 1884–1934 (UD Series 110; MLR No. 129708), Records of the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation, RG 41, NARA, Washington, DC.

Dear Sir:

You have been appointed, with the consent of the Commissioner of Navigation and with compensation at the rate of 1 cent for each person enumerated, SUPERVISOR OF THE CENSUS at the Port of _____, and subports, for the enumeration of crews of vessels in cases where articles of agreement between master and seamen in the merchant service of the United States are required by law.

Please execute the accompanying oath of office in accordance with the instructions given at the bottom of the oath, and return it to this office in the inclosed [sic]official envelope which requires no postage. Your certificate of appointment will be sent you later. Also please fill out and return the inclosed application (Form 15-17).

The instructions below for conducting the work of enumeration should be carefully read and followed:

1. Appointment of Deputy Shipping Commissioners as enumerators. You are authorized, with the consent of the Commissioner of Navigation, to appoint your Deputies as enumerators, using Form 15-101M, the original copy to be made on the white sheet and the duplicate copy on the yellow sheet. The enumerators should execute the oath of office required by law (Form 15-176).

Both the original and duplicate certificate of appointment for each enumerator should be attached to the enumerator's voucher and oath of office and returned to the Bureau of the Census in accordance with the instructions in Paragraph 6.

2. Data to be transcribed from Shipping Articles to Census Schedules. The census data may be transcribed

to the census schedules either from the original shipping articles or from carbon copies of such articles.

3. Enumeration to be made as of April 1, 1930. The census law requires the enumeration to be made as of April 1, 1930. Your deputies, therefore, should secure the census data as of that date for crews of vessels as follows:

a. For crews who sign or have signed articles with the master for voyages about to be made in the case of vessels which are in your port on April 1, 1930.

b. For crews of vessels which sailed from your port prior to April 1, 1930, and are likely to be at sea or in a foreign port on that date. In such cases the deputies should obtain the required census data (on the shipping articles) when the articles are signed. The data (with such corrections, if any, as may be necessary and can be made as of April 1, 1930) should then be transcribed on the census schedules.

4. Persons to be enumerated. Only members of the crew of a vessel who are required by Federal law to sign articles of agreement with the master are to be enumerated.

Do not enumerate the officers of vessels who maintain regular or fixed places of abode ashore. These persons will be enumerated at their homes.

Do not enumerate crews of vessels which are engaged in the coastwise trade (although in some cases they may sign shipping articles through your office) or crews who are not required by law to sign articles of agreement with the master. These crews will be enumerated through arrangements made with the steamship companies.

5. Filling out the schedule. The schedule should be filled out on the typewriter, with pen and ink, or with an indelible pencil, in accordance with the instructions accompanying the schedule.

Entries which are handwritten should be clearly and legibly written.

Entries should not be abbreviated except as indicated in the instructions.

A separate schedule should be filled out for each vessel.

After the schedule has been filled out by the enumerator, he should date and sign it in the spaces provided at the top of the schedule.

6. Filling out the voucher and return of material. After each enumerator has completed his enumeration, he should fill out in duplicate (see sample voucher properly filled out) a voucher for payment for all services performed.

The signature on the voucher must be exactly the same as the signature on the oath of office and the certificate of appointment, and the enumerator should be so instructed.

Both the original and duplicate of the voucher must be returned to this office, together with the enumerator's oath of office, the original and duplicate certificates of appointment, and the completed schedules.

7. Supplies. The following supplies are being sent you under separate cover:
Form 15-160 - Voucher, with sample voucher filled out

Form 15-176 - Oath of office for enumerators
Form 15-101M - Certificate of appointment of enumerator
Schedules
Envelopes
Supervisor's letterheads

8. Return of unused supplies. All unused supplies should be returned to the Bureau of the Census upon completion of the enumeration.

9. Postage not required. No postage is required for sending census matter through the mails.

10. Enumeration not to interfere with regular duties of Deputies. You are at liberty, of course, to make such arrangements as you may deem proper for the conduct of the enumeration in order that such enumeration will not interfere with the regular duties of the deputy shipping commissioners.

It is desired, if possible, that the schedules be completed and forwarded to this office not later than April 15, 1930.

If you desire any other information or require additional supplies, the Bureau will be glad to furnish you the same upon request.

Very truly yours,

[signed]
Director of the Census

Approved:
[signed]
Commissioner of Navigation

APPENDIX III

Form 15-203, *Instructions for Filling out Schedule for Crews of Vessels*

- 1. How schedule should be filled out.** The schedule should be filled out on the typewriter, with pen and ink, or with an indelible pencil.
- 2. The census day.** The returns on the schedule should relate to the census day, April 1, 1930.
- 3. Who is to be enumerated.** All persons aboard ship are to be enumerated *except those officers who have regular or fixed places of abode ashore*. The census data for these persons will be obtained at their homes. Seamen and other persons who claim to be married or give on the crew lists the names of their next of kin *should be included* in the enumeration of the vessels on which they are employed or have secured employment on April 1, 1930, even though they may maintain fixed places of abode on shore in the intervals between employment on different vessels.
- 4. Heading of the schedule.** Enter in the spaces provided at the top of the schedule the name and address of the owner or operator of the vessel, name of vessel, and home port of the vessel. If the vessel does not have any regularly established home port, enter the name of the port in which the vessel is anchored on the census day or from which it sailed last prior to April 1, 1930.
- 5. Column 1. How names are to be written.** Enter first the last name or surname, then the given name in

full, and the initial of the middle name, if any. Example: Smith, John A.

6. Column 2. Sex. Write “M” for male and “F” for female.

7. Column 3. Color or race. Write “W” for white; “Neg” for Negro; “Mex” for Mexican; “Ch” for Chinese; “Jp” for Japanese. For a person of any other race, write the race in full in this column, if the information is obtainable.

8. A person having any percentage of Negro blood is to be returned as a Negro. Both black and mulatto persons are to be returned as Negroes, without distinction.

9. Column 4. Age at last birthday. This question calls for the age in completed years at last birthday. A person whose exact age on the census day, April 1, 1930, is 19 years, 11 months, and 25 days, should be returned simply as 19 years, because that is his age at last birthday prior to April 1, 1930, although at the time of enumeration he may have completed 20 years.

10. Column 5. Single, married, widowed, or divorced. Write “S” for single or unmarried persons; “M” for a married person; “Wd” for widowed (man or woman); and “D” for divorced.

11. Column 6. Whether able to read and write. Write “Yes” for a person who can read and write in any language, whether English or some other, and “No” for such person who can not both read and write in some language.

12. Column 7. Place of birth. If the person was born in the United States, give the State or Territory in which born. The words “United States” are not sufficiently definite. A person born in what is now West Virginia, North Dakota, South Dakota, or Oklahoma should be so reported, although at the time of his birth the particular region may have had a different name. Do not abbreviate the names of States and Territories.

13. If the person was born outside the United States, enter the country in which born, as *Belgium, France, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Sweden, Denmark, China, Japan,* etc., as the case may be.

14. Do not return a person as born in Great Britain, but indicate the particular country, as *England, Scotland, Wales,* etc. Distinction must be made between Northern Ireland and Irish Free State.

15. French Canadians should be distinguished from other Canadians. For a French-speaking person born in Canada, enter *Canada-French*; for all other persons born in Canada, enter *Canada- English* (even though they may not actually speak English).

16. If a person was born in Cuba or Porto Rico, so state, and do not write *West Indies*.

17. If a person was born abroad, but of American parents, write in column 7 both the birthplace and *Am. Cit.*--that is, American citizen. If the person was born at sea, write *At sea*.

18. Spell out the names of countries, and *do not abbreviate in any case*.

19. Column 8. Naturalized or alien. This question should be answered for every person whose birthplace was in a foreign country, as follows:

20. For a foreign-born person (male or female) 21 years of age and over, write “Na” (for naturalized), if he, or she, has become a full citizen, either by taking out second or final papers of naturalization, or, while he or she was under the age of 21 years, through the naturalization of either of the parents. “Pa” (for papers), if he, or she, has declared intention to become an American citizen and has taken out “first papers.” “Al” (for alien) if he, or she, has taken no step toward becoming an American citizen.

21. Column 9. Whether able to speak English. Write “Yes” for a person who can speak English and “No” for a person who can not speak English.

22. Column 10. Occupation. An entry should be made in this column for every person enumerated. The entry should be the word or words which most accurately indicate the particular kind of work done or the occupation on board the vessel. Do *not* use abbreviations.

23. Column 11. Veterans. Write “Yes” for a man who is an ex-service veteran of the United States Army, Navy, or Marine Corps, who has served in any war or expedition, and “No” for a man who is not a veteran. No entry is to be made in this column for males under 21 years of age nor

for females of any age whatever.

- 24. Column 12. What war or expedition.** Where the answer in column 11 is “Yes,” give the name of the war or expedition in which the man served, as World War (WW), Spanish-American War (Sp), Civil War (Civ), Philippine Insurrection (Phil), Boxer Rebellion (Box), Mexican Expedition (Mex), etc.
- 25. Column 13. Address of wife or next of kin.** In this column give the address of the next of kin of each person enumerated, if possible; the wife, in the case of a married man, or the parents of other near relatives in the case of others. Indicate at the right of the column whether wife (W), parent (P), or other relative (R).

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Series 3: Census Bureau Geography Division Subject File, 1889–1950

File: “Crews of Vessels, 1930: Lists and Memos”

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